Richard Gosman, Jim and Alice Brown – Life during WWII

By Richard Gosman, Jim and Alice Brown

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Box 3 Folder 4

Oral Interview conducted by Jennifer Clark

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Brigham Young University – Idaho
JC: Go ahead and state your name.

DG: I’m Dick Gosman.

JC: Okay, where were you born?

DG: When?

JC: Where?

DG: Where? I was born in Butte, Montana.

JC: Okay, when?

DG: February 23, 1925.

JC: Okay, how old were you on December 7, 1941?

DG: I’d be sixteen.

JC: Do you remember that day?

DG: Yes.

JC: Okay, what did you think about it, when you heard the, about the attacks?

DG: Well, I was too young to really realize I think, the full impact of what was happening. And of course everyone had a lot of indignation and it ran through the family. It – indignation about it and sad of course.

JC: Did you serve in the armed forces during the war?

DG: Yes.

JC: Where were you, were you in combat?

DG: No.

JC: Where did you serve?

DG: In the Pacific.

JC: Any specific place? Or just around?

DG: Around, on Midway Island.
JC: Ok, what was your rank?

DG: I was a field cook, when I was discharged.

JC: Ok, so you just cooked?

DG: Yup.

JC: Did you like it?

DG: Yeah.

JC: Ok, that’s…

DG: It was a good duty.

JC: Did you meet and make any friends in the war?

DG: Yes.

JC: Did you lose any of them, did any of them…?

DG: No.

JC: So you weren’t in combat at all?

DG: No.

JC: That’s cool. That’s fun. How did the military train you and prepare you for combat?

DG: How did the military do what?

JC: Train you?

DG: Well, boot camp, basic boot camp training and we spent, I think five weeks on the rifle range because all marines are trained pretty extensively in the rifle. And then the rest of the training was on the job training. I went to assistant cook and had to learn some of the trade. They trained you up a little bit.

JC: Okay. Where did you have your basic training at?

DG: San Diego, Marine Corp boot recruit depot.

JC: Did you go to boot camp right after high school?

DG: No I was – I graduated in May of ’43 and went in, in January of ’43.
JC: Okay, were you already married at that time?

DG: Married?

JC: Yeah.

DG: Oh no.

JC: Okay, did you leave anybody behind though? Were you dating anybody at the time? Or anything like that?

DG: Not very much, no.

JC: Okay.

DG: At sixteen or seventeen you’re not too serious.

JC: Well I was, no (laughter.) Is there anything that you wish that the people who were training you would have told you before you left camp?

DG: No, I can’t think of anything.

JC: Okay, what was your image of the foreign leaders like Hitler and Mussolini?

DG: My image of what?

JC: The foreign leaders of like Hitler and …

DG: Oh, we figured they were, what’s a good word, despots, or…

AB: Yeah, the scum of the earth. (Laughter)

JC: Yeah.

AB: I guess they…

DG: We didn’t have much respect or, strong feelings for them, or any respect.

JC: What about your opinion of the Japanese and the Germans?

DG: About what?

JC: What is your opinion of the Japanese and the Germans?

DG: Oh, neutral. I still reserve some resentment toward especially toward the Japanese.
JC: Okay. When did you first hear about the Germany concentration camps?

DG: It’s hard for me to say, probably after I was discharged in December of ’45.

JC: Really, that late? That’s interesting. What did you think of them at the time?

DG: Well, it was a very horrifying thing. I was, I don’t think we could really grasp the magnitude of it by not being, you know, by not seeing it or observing first hand but we all realized what a terrible thing it was I’m sure.

JC: Did you believe it when you first heard about it, or did you think it was just a…

DG: I think so yes, because I think it was pretty well accepted by the time that we heard about it.

JC: That you heard about it. Okay, how was your life changed as a result of World War II?

DG: Oh, it took me from a program in college that I wasn’t a bit interested in and put me through maturity and when I came back from the service I was, I had more direction, more idea what I wanted to be and roots, so I think it was certainly a maturing factor and…

JC: Okay, was there any trauma that stayed with you? Like post trauma…

DG: No, not really.

JC: Did you know anybody that had it?

DG: Yes.

JC: And how did that affect you, seeing that?

DG: Well, there’s a sense of loss I guess, but you don’t, you’re not too close to it really.

JC: Okay, how did your religious beliefs help you cope with the war?

DG: Didn’t impact them.

JC: Didn’t impact them, okay. How did you contribute as an individual and in your community to the war effort? Did you buy bonds or… did you, besides serving?

DG: Well, I wasn’t here very much so I don’t really know.
AB: They had, I remember they’d send – we bought saving bonds or saving stamps in school. Remember they’d come and they’d sell us.

DG: Yeah, I don’t remember doing that though.

AB: I do.

DG: When did they start that, early on or…

AB: Yeah, and then when you got enough you’d trade it in for a bond. And then they had bond drives.

DG: Yeah, I don’t really remember too much about that part of it.

JC: Okay that’s okay. So what did you do to entertain yourself while you were in the military?

DG: Well, we read quite a bit in our leisure time, of course, when I was in the Hawaiian Islands why, Liberty was the big thing, site seeing and just touring the islands.

JC: So did you get to go to…

DG: And when I was on Midway, there wasn’t a great deal to do – we did a lot of running and work on the beaches, just swimming, and reading and we had a movie probably once or twice a week.

JC: A movie that you went to go watch or did they bring it to the…?

DG: I’m sorry?

JC: A movie that you went to go watch or did you, did they bring it to your camp thing?

DG: They’d bring it.

JC: Okay.

DG: They’d have it set – a place to show them there in a kind of theater set up on the base.

JC: Alright, did you get to go see, the Pearl Harbor site in Hawaii?

DG: Yeah.

JC: How was that? Did it affect you in anyway?

DG: Well, when I got there it was pretty well cleaned up.
DG: There was quite a lot of damage and wreckage left on Midway when we got there, when I got there. I got there about oh, I think the Battle of Midway in June of ’42 and it was only a year when I got there, but there was still a lot of damage there then.

JC: So you didn’t have to spend a lot of money to entertain yourself in the army.

DG: No.

JC: Okay, what kind of food did you serve?

DG: Oh, real good food in the bases I was in. We got a lot of fresh foods, and good meat, and I don’t think there was really any complaint about the quality of the food, there might have been the way it was prepared. (Laughter)

AB: You were a pretty good cook weren’t you?

JC: Interesting. So what do you remember about rationing? Did you…?

DG: About who?

JC: Rationing.

AB: Rationing?

JC: Rationing?

AB: Rationing?

JC: Rationing.

DG: I don’t remember anything about it.

JC: Did it come to Lima [Montana]?

AB: Oh yeah – we had Alice Nelson as the …

DG: I can remember one incident before I went to the service we were in the first year of the war and it was all – everything was in short supply and the ranch that I was working on had a lot of sheep, and they were getting ready to lamb the sheep and they couldn’t get canvas for the sheds. And this owner of the property approached the war rationing board or whatever it was and wanted to know how he could get some canvas. And they said, well now the best thing you could do is put off your lambing. (laughter.) Well the first of the ewes were already lambing. (more laughter.)

JC: Okay, so do you remember how the war affected Lima? Do you remember how it affected the community? Was it a big impact?
DG: Not really, at first we didn’t hear much of it.

AB: Well, it did impact the school because a lot of the older boys that were seniors when we were freshman went to the service.

JC: And they didn’t get to graduate high school?

AB: No, when we started high school we had 22 in our class, we graduated with 8, because people moved to work in war plants, and boys went to the service.

JC: So a lot of people moved from here?

AB: Yeah.

JC: Even though, they’d just quit their jobs and they’d just leave to go…

AB: Well, families would move.

JC: Okay, places like where? Like in Montana?

AB: Huh?

JC: In Montana?

AB: No. Like places in Ogden. Gertie went down there and worked.

JC: Did you know any young men that did not return from the war?

DG: Yeah a few, not too many.

JC: Did you know their families?

DG: In a few instances.

JC: How did their families cope with their loss?

DG: I don’t, I can’t answer that, I don’t know.

JC: Okay, were they from here or were…?

DG: There were one or two of them from here.

JC: And how did the community cope with it?

DG: I don’t know.
JC: Were you still gone when it happened?

DG: Yeah.

JC: What was it like to have – so what is the most vivid memory of World War II that stands out to you?

DG: Well, I don’t know any horror stories about combat to relate so (laughter). I don’t know. Probably Liberty and the Hawaiian Islands, the boredom and on Midway, and I guess that’s about it.

JC: Okay, and that’s about all the questions. Thank you so much.

DG: You’re welcome.

[End of first interview, beginning the second]  

JC: Would you please state your name.

JB: James T. Brown.

JC: And where were you born?

JB: In Clarence, Missouri.

JC: When?

JB: May the 11th 1927.

JC: Okay, How old were you on December 7, 1941?

AB: 14.

JB: I was a freshman in high school, that’s pretty young.

AB: 14.

JB: 14.

JC: That’s not young to me, that wasn’t very long ago for me. Okay, what do you remember about that day? Anything?

JB: Mystified, mystery.

JC: You guys didn’t get to hear about it right away though.
JB: No, not right away. The next morning we heard President Roosevelt on the radio. That was after the fact.

JC: And that was the day of infamy speech right?

JB: Yeah.

JC: And how did that affect you? Were you in shock or…

JB: No, just kind of mystified, just, you just don’t relate to it, you don’t, it’s something entirely new to us. You just don’t relate to it.

JC: When did you go into the armed forces during the war?

JB: 1945.

AB: In June.

JC: Okay, were you in combat?

JB: No.

JC: Okay, where did you serve?

JB: On Guam, I was in the Navy Seabees.

JC: What are the Navy Seabees?

JB: Naval Construction Battalion.

JC: Oh, I didn’t know that. Okay, what was your rank?

JB: Seaman First Class.

JC: Okay and when did you get out of those?

JB: ’46 August 12th or 14th.

JC: So you weren’t in the reserves or anything. Were you drafted? Or just joined for the…

JB: I enlisted for the duration and thirty days.

JC: Okay, so did you make any friends while you were in Guam?

JB: Yup.
JC: Interesting. And what did you do? You just built things, or, what did you build?

JB: Well, airfields, roads, it was dirt work in machinery.

JC: So how did they train you for that?

JB: Well, I worked on the railroad on the drag line before I went into the services, so there was no training as far as I was concerned.

JC: So you didn’t have to go to boot camp?

JB: No, I went to boot camp.

AB: Tell her about the Jap sneaking into the chow line.

JB: That boot camp in San Diego just across the Bay from where Dick went.

JC: Okay, what was that story?

AB: When you were in, on Guam, tell her about the Japanese that were up in the hills.

JB: Well…

AB: That were [sic] getting in the chow line.

JB: There were still Japanese surrendering on the island of Guam just a couple three years ago. They were mostly trying to get hold up or set up we called them CD Greens or Marine Greens and they’d actually get in the chow line and go through the chow line to get something to eat.

JC: Really, and they’d just let them?

JB: They looked just like Polynesian people.

JC: Were there any, did you have any friends from here that you went over with? No. Were there a lot of people from here that went into the war?

JB: There were a lot of people but none that were closely related.

AB: Stanley, Spencer.

JB: Yeah, well but…

AB: Classmates.
JC: Was there anything that you wish the military would have told you before you went to Guam?

JB: No, I don’t think so.

JC: Okay, so what was your image of the foreign leaders like Hitler and Mussolini?

JB: I think probably just about the same as everybody else that was in the service at that time.

JC: It is comparable to the picture of Saddam Hussein is now do you think? Is that comparable?

JB: It’s comparable, maybe a little worse.

JC: Okay and why is that do you think? Why would it be worse?

JB: Just their everyday attitude and their way of doing things.

JC: Okay, do you think it affected them that they dropped the bomb on Pearl Harbor? Is that a lot of the reason they hated them so, I guess?

JB: Well, how else would you feel really?

JC: Okay, so what are your opinions of the Japanese and the Germans now?

JB: I’m indifferent.

JC: Are you worried about them coming over here to the US?

JB: Not so much those two nations now, but others yeah.

JC: When did you first hear about the German concentration camps?

JB: Probably ’45,’44 or ’45.

JC: Were you in the military when you heard about it or were you here in Lima, [Montana]?

JB: No, I was in the military.

JC: Okay, and how, what was the overall attitude of your Seabees about the German concentration camps?

JB: I don’t know that.
JC: Okay, what was you attitude towards it? (Laughter)

JB: I’m still in shock about it; I don’t like to bid on that. (Laughter)

JC: Were you upset about it?

JB: Yeah.

JC: Okay, how was you life changed as a result of World War II?

JB: I don’t think it was a lot.

JC: Not a lot. So, you didn’t have any trauma stay with you?

JB: No.

JC: And did you know anybody that had it?

JB: Well, later.

JC: You don’t – you’ve met people that have had it? Right. How did your religious beliefs help you cope with your military experience?

JB: It didn’t effect them.

JC: How did you contribute as an individual in your community to help the war effort?

JB: We gathered up bottles and tin cans, and scrap metal and …

JC: And where did you take those?

JB: To the pile over by the depot and loaded it in a boxcar or flatcar once in a while and take it to the west coast I guess.

JC: So what did you do to entertain yourselves while you were here and when there wasn’t a lot of money to go around?

AB: We went to the movie every Sunday night.

JC: We went to the movie on Sunday night.

JC: How much did that cost?

JB, Oh, twenty-five cents a ticket.

AB: I don’t know you took me. (Laughter)
JC: So other than that did you play sports, you played sports here right?

JB: Tried to.

JC: You tried to (laughter). So that’s basically what you did here?

JB: Yup.

JC: And you just ran around and stuff okay. So how did the war affect the community since you guys were here a lot of the time?

AB: Well, I remember trying to get enough gas and tires to go on a date, and my mother, the ranchers got more ration tickets for gas. And every now and again my mother would slip us an eight ticket and we could go and buy ten gallons of gas.

JB: Not ten gallons, you mean four gallons.

AB: Oh, four gallons, and we used a lot of honey in place of sugar. Sugar was rationed, coffee was rationed, gas, and like Dick said canvas (laughter). But Mom every now and again she’d give us a ration coupon we could go to the show.

JC: The show here?

AB: They had a show on Sunday night, once a week. And that’s how we learned of the news. They always had a news clip first, you know, probably ten minutes, and that was how some of the horrors of the war, we did see that on the Sunday night movies.

JC: Interesting.

AB: It’s like now they’d have the news first, then they always had the clips of war.

JC: They, like clips of like actual combat?

AB: Actual combat and the developed Pearl Harbor bombing that we seen pictures that they took.

JC: Wow.

AB: And that brought the war a little closer.

JC: So they were actual combat pictures. Did you know any young men that didn’t come back from the war? What were some of the most vivid memories of World War II that stand out to you, whether you were in the military or whether you were at home?
JB: Probably the news, newsreel, showing the actual combat. You could, I remember, you can actually, in your memory, you can actually I like to think it’s in my image you can remember the newsreel of Jap planes dive bombing the ships on Pearl Harbor. I can still see the mushroom cloud from the newsreel when they dropped the “A” bomb on the Japs.

JC: Okay. That’s the most vivid memory you have, that makes sense. Okay, did you have any brothers or anything that served in the military?

AB: Chuck.

JB: Chuck, later though.

JC: Later.

JB: Not then, between World War II and the Korean War.

JC: So he wasn’t in either?

JB: He wasn’t in either.

JC: Oh okay, and you were home when he was in the military, right?

JB: Yeah.

JC: And how did you keep in touch with him?

JB: Letters.

JC: Just, okay, and was the post office or the anything like that affected from the war, was it hard?

AB: They got free postage to mail their letters.

JC: The military did?

AB: Yup, don’t you remember they wrote free on them. Remember that Dick?

DG: Yeah.

JC: Cool, you don’t see that now. Okay, well thank you Grandpa.

DG: Were they still bombing off of Tinian and Saitan when you were in Guam?

JB: Yeah they were still, let’s see, they dropped the “A” bomb on the Japs when we was two day out of Guam. So two days later we, … we got to Guam and was assigned to
build a camp and what not and the navy seals land in the big bombers off Tinian not Guam, not Guam.

DG: An unlimited off of Guam, Santana and just Tinian.

JB: But there were still there were still planes in and out of Guam Northwest Field there on Guam even in ’46.

JC: So Grandpa will you tell the story of Pat?

JB: Grandma can tell, she can tell you more about Pat Shaffer than I can.

AB: Pat Shaffer worked for my dad, and was a real good friend of Carl’s and he went into the service, into the Navy from here. And he was on the USS Indianapolis they were over, close to Guam.

JB: The Indianapolis took the “A” bomb then.

AB: Anyways, there they were on the ship and the Japanese hadn’t heard that the war, that they had surrendered.

DG: They hadn’t yet, hadn’t surrendered. When they torpedoed the Indianapolis, the war was still on.

AB: But anyway, I thought it had gotten over a day or two before.

DG: No.

JB: They hadn’t actually surrendered yet.

AB: Yeah, anyway…

JC: But the “A” bomb had been dropped.

DG: I don’t think it had been dropped yet when they sunk the Indianapolis.

JB: Yeah, it had.

AB: Yeah, it had.

JB: Pat said it had anyway.

AB: Well, I’ve got the newspaper in there.

DG: Well, they turned right around from Tintian, and headed for the Philippines. And the Japs torpedoed them along the way.
JB: Yup.

DG: So I was questioning whether they had time to drop the “A” bomb yet.

AB: I’m looking at it. But anyway this, it sunk the Indianapolis and Pat Shaffer was, and the crew a lot of them died, but a lot of them, Pat was in the water for five days with the oil and the, he was horribly burned. And, but he did survive, and he came back to Montana and visited.

JC: So is he affected mentally from this?

AB: No.

JB: He just won’t talk about it.

JC: Okay, so did you find that a lot with the veterans who were in combat that they wouldn’t talk about it?

AB: Not till later.

JB: Way, way later in Pat’s life, he finally sat right where she is sitting now and told us about it.

JC: And that was the mission of the sharks right? That’s the same USS Indianapolis.

AB: Yeah, I’ll look that newspaper up, I got it in there.

DG: Yeah, I’m curious now, because I didn’t think they had dropped the bomb yet when they sank the…

AB: (Laughter) Are you through with me?

JC: No, I’m not through with you; I have lots of questions for you.

DG: There’s a lot of controversy over why the ship wasn’t reported overdue.

JB: They had lost communication over somewhere according to Pat. He…

DG: They made no attempt to search for it or anything.

JB: No, not for about ten, ten days or two weeks later before they started looking for her.

JC: The Indianapolis?

DG: It was five days before they found her.
JB: It was overdue at Leyti in the Philippines.

DG: Yeah.

JB: It was overdue something like six, seven days or something before they even started looking for her.

DG: Well, actually it was discovered by, just by accident. They weren’t searching for her, because PBY flew over and saw these guys in the water and they at that time didn’t realize it was the Indianapolis survivors.

JC: So how many survivors were there, do you know?

DG: They said 500 out of 1500 or 1800.

JB: Something like that. Way more than half the crew perished.

JC: So a lot of them died when the actual ship was bombed right or did a lot of them kill themselves…?

JB: Well, yeah, a lot of them died, never got off the ship.

JC: Okay.

DG: Well, the sharks got an awful lot of them. They were in the water, like Jim said for five days.

JB: And Pat sat right there now…

DG: It wasn’t very long before the Japs surrendered.

AB: Yeah, they didn’t believe it at first, did they?

JC: So is that a newspaper from Lima?

AB: No, it was from Seattle.

JB: Post Intelligence.

AB: Seattle Post Intelligence and I don’t know why we even have it, but it was current, this was in 1958, but it’s so scraggled it’s hard to…

JC: You should really let me laminate it for you.
AB: Yeah. Okay, now here, the map of the last days of the Indianapolis it shows there survivors were spotted by planes August 2nd and they were rescued August 3rd. They delivered the bomb…

DG: It was a while before the end of the war yet. It was probably sunk in July then.

AB: Yeah, it says they arrived in Guam in Tinian, and delivered the bomb on July 26th, and they were going back to Leyti. July 29th or 30th when they were torpedoed, so they weren’t picked up till August 2nd. But anyway, it should be laminated Jen.

JB: You know that’s kind of, well they must have the facts right in that paper.

DG: Say what Jim?

JB: I said they must have those facts right in that paper or they wouldn’t of dared put it in there.

AB: They didn’t make the announcement till August 16th, 1945.

DG: It was pretty embarrassing to the navy.

AB: Yeah.

JB: Well, the commander of the, the big shot guy of the navy commander was a, I think he was on Guam – it wasn’t the commander of the South Pacific Nemis, it wasn’t him, it was another one, but anyhow, they kinda shrugged off the fact that they hadn’t heard from the Indianapolis for dang near a week.

DG: Well, part of the reason was, the way I remember reading it was, it was a top secret mission.

JB: Yeah, it was a definitely a top secret mission.

AB: Yeah.

DG: And the ship was detached from the fleet so there was none available, but there were several questions about, one of the big questions is what was the ship doing when it, you know, in a combat zone of the war allowing itself to be torpedoed like that, it just don’t happen.

JC: So what did they, what did Pat have to do when he got home? Did he have to go to any…?

AB: Well he worked as a firefighter…
JB: Well, yeah, but after he was initially after his discharge, he had the shrinks talking to him.

DG: What was that Jim?

JB: The shrinks.

DG: Oh.

JB: Talking to him for a couple weeks after he got his discharge.

JC: Was he discharged right after the incident?

AB: Well, I’m sure right as soon as they picked them up they were out of the service.

JB: Well, he spent damn near a month in the hospital on Hawaii.

AB: Yeah a long time in the hospital.

JB: He had to have skin healings and barnacle bites and all that all over their body.

JC: And they were taken to Hawaii and that’s where they were treated for all of that.

JB: Ended up in Hawaii. But he was in medical attention elsewhere.

DG: They had hospital ships.

JB: They had hospital ships down there someplace.

AB: It shows pictures of the ones that were picked up in the water.

DG: They court-martialed the captain I think, didn’t they?

JB: Yup.

JC: Why? Just because he was in total charge and he…

DG: They put the blame on him.

AB: Well, it said in here because he had them zigzagging the ship.

JC: And the captain lived obviously then?

AB: McVeigh was the captain’s name, Charles McVeigh, he was court-martialed right away.
JC: Did Pat say how he felt about that? Did he think he should have been court-martialed?

JB: He wouldn’t talk much about it.

AB: Yeah, it was a long time before he would talk about it.

JB: He still wouldn’t, he just, he just sat there and told us about delivering the bomb and they didn’t even know what they had delivered.

JC: But he didn’t give an opinion or anything about it. Okay Grandpa.

DG: Well, I better go.

JC: Grandma are you ready for the rest of your questions?

AB: Oh all right.

DG: Well, I’m gonna go excuse me, are you done with me?

JC: I am thank you so much.

DG: Well see you later guys.

JC: Be careful Lee.

JC: Okay Grandma.

AB: Okay.

JC: Go ahead and state your name.

AB: Do you want me to get over there?

JC: This is fine, it doesn’t matter, just make sure I have you, okay, what do you remember about that day?

AB: Disbelief, and that they could do such a thing to an American island, it was part of our country. That it is could have actually been done.

JC: Okay, how did your religious beliefs help you cope?

AB: Well, I’m sure that we all prayed a lot about anybody that we had in the service.

JC: You and Grandpa were together when he went to war right?
AB: We were – I guess you could say high school sweethearts.

JC: How did you, how did it affect you when he told you he was leaving?

AB: Well, I didn’t like it (laughter). We were just kids too. We, he wrote a lot of letters, and I went to, well I went to college in Dillon then I got a letter every, sometimes I get a bunch in a row you know like four or five, and then wouldn’t get one for a while and they were all marked free.

JC: When you went to school, how, how was the economy affected? Did it affect you?

AB: Well, other than the rationing it didn’t really affect us any. We, it was hard to go anywhere because we didn’t have enough gas to go, but it was nothing that was horrible or anything, but I, we went to the show every Sunday night, and the news clips kept us kind of informed because there was no television, we had radio and that was all, well, that brought the war closer.

JC: So the radio, it kept you informed too right?

AB: Yeah but you know we were in school all day.

JC: So, how did you pay for college then?

AB: Well, I stayed with my sister and my Mother and Dad paid for it.

JC: Okay.

AB: Tuition wasn’t very much.

JC: How much was it, do you remember?

AB: Probably less than 500 dollars per year.

JC: And you stayed with Aunt Marie.

AB: And I stayed with my sister, Marie.

JC: How was student life affected by the war?

AB: Well, the first year I was in college in Dillon, there were no, there were two men. There were all that was in 19… in the fall of, ’45, there were two men in the whole student body. There were all in the service or working. And then the next year the men started coming back in the fall of ’46.

JC: Okay, so there was like a female student body president and everything?
AB: Yeah, yeah there were just no men.

JC: So there weren’t any athletics? Did they allow…

AB: No, now the second year that I was there they did have football.

JC: Did they play eleven man football?

AB: Ah, yeah college football.

JC: Who did, what schools did they play? Can’t remember?

AB: (Laughter) Butte I suppose.

JB: Dillon, Twin Bridges, Sheridan…

AB: No, no, this is college. They had a football team at college.

JB: Oh yeah.

AB: So they would play school mine.

JB: Montana Tech.

AB: Montana Tech.

JB: Carroll.

JC: So the same ones they play now.

AB: And we had dances, the second year we were there, your Dad, or Grandpa would come and go.

JC: So, were there dances and things like that the first year?

AB: No, not much.

JC: So there wasn’t very much social interaction.

AB: The girls, we had sororities, the girls we kinda made our own fun.

JC: So you were able to concentrate a lot more on school that first year (laughter).

AB: But then I, you know you could get a two year teaching diploma. So that’s what I got.
JC: A two year teaching diploma?

AB: A two year.

JC: Not any specific subjects?

AB: Just an elementary education.

JC: Really? Was it year round?

AB: No.

JC: I wish it was like that now that would be nice, I’d be almost done. So did they let you girls play sports or anything like that? Like intramurals or…?

AB: No, in college, did they let you?

AB: Oh, no I never did play sports.

JC: But did they allow it?

AB: Yes, but they didn’t have, they didn’t have girls basketball until later, till after I was out.

JC: Did you have any, did Carl go to the war?

AB: No, Carl was exempt because of his health and because ranchers were considered…

JB: Essentials.

AB: Essentials to the war effort so Carl he was…

JC: So what was it like not having any of the young men around?

AB: Well, (laughter) we did have dances. But then see, during the war, there still was some of the kids in school, we had dances, a lot of dances.

JB: A lot of them were 4-H.

JC: So since…

JB: 4-F rather.

JC: Right, since a lot of the ranchers were allowed to stay I’d imagine there were a lot more young men here than there were in other places.
AB: Yeah, there were some that you know they were, they stayed for, because they were essential to the war effort.

JC: But there were only two in college that first year?

AB: Two men in college in – okay I went during the fall of ’45, and that year there were no, there were two men and they were older.

JC: Hum, was there, how big was the student body? It wasn’t very big was it?

AB: Not very big. I would guess probably 300 at the most.

JC: What do you remember about rationing? Just what you’ve said or…?

AB: Well, I remember going to the lady by the name of Alice Nelson the one that you went and everybody had each child in a family had a ration pint, coupon. So when you went to the store you tore out the coupons and give them for the…

JB: Sugar or…

AB: Sugar, gasoline, coffee.

JC: And that’s all you were allowed to get for a month?

AB: Yeah.

JB: Meat.

AB: Yeah, meat was rationed. Of course it didn’t affect us because my Dad had a ranch so he’d just butchered. It didn’t affect us as far as the meat.

JC: Okay, did you have any dairy cows, like milk cows?

AB: Well, we always had a milk cow.

JC: So, was that rationed?

AB: And we raised a pig, everybody raised a pig, and we had chickens so we had our own eggs and fixed the chicken, so, it didn’t affect us any as far as the meat.

JB: My Dad, his ration card for meat was 30-60 rifle.

JC: So he’d just kill them (laughter).

JB: That’s the only way.
AB: He did a lot of hunting.

JB: That’s what I mean.

JC: How many kids were at home?

AB: Four, you see cuz Bobby and Roberta didn’t come until he was in the service. They came at Christmas ’45, the two Bob and Roberta.

JC: Who’s their parents?

AB: Grandpa Brown’s brother Bill, and Mabel was their mother, and she died, and their grandparents were trying to take care of them and couldn’t take care of them see, cuz Bob was only two and a half.

JC: So then big Grandma and Grandpa took them?

AB: Grandma and Grandpa, they came on the train.

JC: So when that happened did they get, were there still rationing happening when they came.

AB: No, well I think rationing went on till June of ’45. But see Grandpa, I mean Grandpa worked for the railroad so they could get a pass on the railroad to go back and pick up the two kids in Missouri.

JB: Now a pass is a free ticket.

AB: Free ticket.

JC: So they were all the way back in Missouri when they came.

AB: Yeah, I don’t remember what town.

JC: This is Bobby, Uncle Bobby right?

AB: Uncle Bob and then Roberta. She was five. I don’t…

JB: I don’t think you’d remember her, she died.

JC: No, I don’t, I remember seeing pictures of her, she was a really pretty lady. I remember seeing that.

JB: She had a cabin up on Timber’s Lake, and there was a bad snow year, and the snow plugged the chimney. They went up there for a weekend and started the propane on the gas stove, and they stayed there and she got gassed.
JC: Was it just her?

AB: She was married and had four kids. That was in 1978.

JC: Was this here then?

AB: Well down in Island Park, Idaho. They lived in Pocatello. The reason I remember it was ’78 is because I was back where Stacy was born in Fort Meade, Maryland.

JC: You were in Maryland when it happened?

AB: Yeah, so I didn’t go to the funeral. Is this all going on there?

JC: Yeah.

JB: She’s going to edit.

JC: I don’t know. That looks like that’s about it. Were there any other, what were your vivid memories of World War II?

JB: Just what we told you.

AB: It was kind of an exciting time, and I do remember one thing that a lot of the ladies around here made bandages for the Red Cross and they sewed hospital gowns for the hospitals. And another thing that I didn’t get in on much, but they met every bus and every train and had cookies and coffee for the service men going through cuz some of them went on the busses. The buses ran what, four times a day back and forth, with service men, and then they’d meet the train, we had passenger trains then.

JC: From where? Where ever?

AB: Salt Lake, probably.

JB: All the way through here. Two south, and two north, four buses a day. Two trains north and two trains south.

AB: The two trains would go through here, and they would meet the train, it didn’t matter what hour of the night. They would pass out cookies, and sometimes sandwiches, coffee and…

JC: Was coffee rationed?

AB: Yeah, sometimes they would fix up like, little lunches. And pass them out to them.
JC: Just the ladies in the community, all of them? When you were in high school, were there a lot of male teachers or did they have to go to war?

JB: We had two male teachers. Older people.

AB: One was crippled. And then our favorite was the superintendent, no he was the principal, no he taught English, anyway, we were heart broken when he went to the service. He was there our freshman year, then he went to the service.

JC: He joined though.

AB: Yeah, then he came back later, Mr. Mulaney and he was superintendent. They had, the only one I can remember is the cripple teacher.

JB: Birdside, I didn’t call, what we called him I think was the pronunciation of “Birdsid” or “Birdside.”

AB: He was our math teacher.

JB: We called him “Birdseed.”

AB: We had a lot of older women.

JB: Yup.

AB: I remember one thing Dick Gosman’s mother went back to teaching. She was our Chemistry and Biology; she was the Home Ec. Teacher.

JC: But she wasn’t teaching though?

AB: Yes she was a teacher, but they drafted her to come back.

JB: She quit teaching when Dick and Bob were kids. See Dick’s Dad was the conductor on the railroad so he was gone every other night or every other day, so she had to quit teaching.

JC: To stay home.

AB: So she came back and taught for probably three years.

JB: Dick, Dick had graduated when she came back to teach and Bobby, which was our age, he went to high school in Dillon.

JC: Even though his Mom taught here?

AB: Yup.
JC: So he had to of stayed with somebody.

AB: Yeah, he did.

JC: Well, thank you.